

way to disenfranchise intentionally the military vote because it might turn the election in a different direction. That, of course, is extremely odious.

Madam Speaker, I hope this Congress will take steps to make clear once and for all that the sense of this body and the people who represent the people of the United States of America find this particularly odious, especially when we understand that the risk, the separations, the hardship, the work that our troops are doing around the world, that many of us just take for granted. When you are out there and see it firsthand and talk to these folks, you are proud; and to think that somebody would actively say, we are not sure we want to have their vote counted because it might not help my candidate, is, certainly, misguided.

So we have work to do on this. I urge my colleagues to pay attention to this and support legislation when it comes forward. I am proud of our troops overseas, and I know every single Member of this body is too.

MEMBER REPORT ON U.S. MISSION IN KOSOVO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I have just returned from the Balkans, Bosnia and Kosovo with two other members of the Committee on Armed Services. Due to the ongoing debate in this House and elsewhere regarding the U.S. role, I offer Members a report on my observations.

The situation in Kosovo is, of course, complicated. To be summed up broadly, Serbs inside Kosovo are afraid of the Albanian majority, while those Albanians are afraid of the nation of Serbia next door. These two groups have one thing in common: they are both glad the U.S. and European troops are there to protect them and provide stability.

It is not well known that the U.S. provides a small minority of the force in Kosovo. Visitors who see only Camp Bondsteel and the American sectors can get the impression that the United States stands alone between ancient enemies. That is a skewed view. The fact is that American forces are only 18 percent of the efforts in Kosovo. General Ferrell told me that he intends to reduce the figure by some 15 to 20 percent. In fact, there are more American contractors building roads and schools, cooking meals, providing support for the troops than there are American soldiers.

Let us talk about those soldiers, Madam Speaker. We hear a lot about bringing Americans home and how soldiers do not belong out there, so I asked the soldiers on the line, and they are proud of what they are doing. They told me they are proud to be peace-

makers. They know why they are in Kosovo. In fact, the enlisted soldiers know more about the political situation in the Balkans than a lot of political scientists do here in Washington.

The proof of their pride is that re-enlistment is higher among the units deployed in Kosovo than anywhere else in the Army. The soldiers are working hard and the tempo of operations is high. When our troops believe that they are doing what they came into the Army to do, they will come back, and they are. That is a strong message to all of us and especially to those who think peacekeeping is somehow below the dignity of American soldiers.

Remember, too, that the soldiers on that line today will be the leaders and NCOs of the next conflict, if one comes.

We are also working well with our allies, as well as the Russians. It is a fringe benefit that can pay off for the U.S. in the future. By the way, believe it or not, the Russians send troops to Kosovo as a reward for good service elsewhere. A French general told me that their involvement in Kosovo has been the best thing to happen to recruitment in a long time.

We are making a difference. I asked soldiers of all ranks, What would happen if the U.S. pulled out of the Balkans? One said it best in a simple word: "Boom." Kosovo today is not what it was even 6 months ago. One American sergeant told me that the local population has fought itself out, and that they are glad we are there so that they can stop fighting. But if we leave, the weariness will not prevail.

The peace is clearly tenuous. I visited one village where the Serbian and Albanian children share the same schoolhouse. They go into different rooms through different doors, but the fact that they are in the same building is a breakthrough. On the other hand, there was an armed patrol of 16 Albanian guerillas leaving their training location, which is in an officially demilitarized zone, and that night a van was blown up, killing three Serb policemen. Passions clearly still run high.

But the facts should not frighten the United States from its duty. As General Quinlan told me, Madam Speaker, there is no military solution to this situation; but our military presence is buying the time and space for a political solution. Yes, tension in the Balkans remains high, but America can be proud of our young men and our young women as they are keeping the peace and, more important, they are proud of it. Madam Speaker, I hope that every Member here is proud of them too. I certainly am.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 51 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Lord, by Your light and grace, grant us vision. Sometimes when we ask vision of You, we are impelled to unlock mysteries or blinded by the future. But the vision You offer is given to help us live fully into the present moment.

Walking by faith is like walking by candlelight. You give us just enough to take our next step.

Grant us vision as a Nation that we may make the right step, at Your direction, together.

As leaders in this Congress, shed Your light upon us that people are willing to follow our lead. As representatives may we find Your people willing to move with us in the direction You guide.

Give us grateful hearts which recognize Your gift, acting in us, when we find common vision. Vision gives us hope now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TRAFICANT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

COMMUNICATION FROM CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means:

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 7, 2001.

Hon. DENNIS HASTER, *Speaker, House of Representatives, The Capitol, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I am forwarding to you the Committee's recommendations for certain designations required by law for the 107th Congress.